



Advising Alchemy: Transmuting Graduate Success through Stakeholder-Centered Assessment

2024 Assessment Institute

Indianapolis, IN



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Presenters



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Learning outcomes



Distinguish

Distinguish elements of successful graduate advising.



Map

Map key stakeholders in the advising relationship.



Identify

Conjure resources that promote good advising relationships.



Assess

Harness the Magnum Opus: Assessment

...And have fun while learning



FORMING



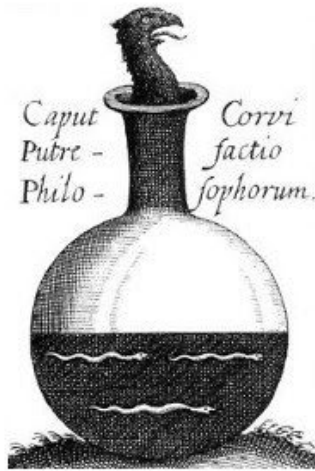
STORMING



NORMING

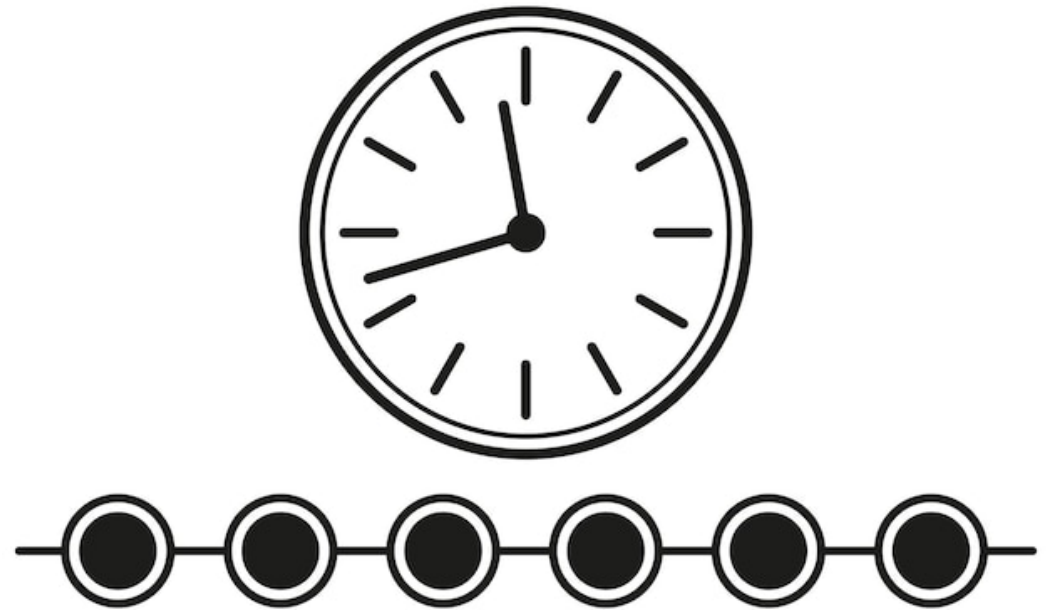


PERFORMING



Session timeline

- Context and Background
- Survey instrument
- Results
- Response plan
- Key takeaways
- Discussion



Let's get to know you – raise your hand...

1. Have you ever been a graduate student?
2. Do you often work with graduate students?
3. Have you ever heard about or dealt with challenges related to graduate advising?

What is your role?

- Faculty (Primarily teaching/research)
- Staff
- Leadership (Director, Dean, President, etc.)
- Other?



Why Does Quality Mentoring Matter?



Graduate students are important members contributing to academic and research communities.

Recruiting students is expensive (time and money).

Graduate advising can make or break a student's experience, impacting retention and success.

Graduate students are a vulnerable population.

Graduate Students become highly educated working professionals.



Context of Graduate Education, OSU

- The Ohio State University
 - 60,000 total students
 - 46,000 undergraduate
 - 14,000 graduate and professional
 - 300+ graduate and professional programs
 - 5 regional campuses
- College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
 - 3,100 total students
 - 2,650 undergraduate
 - 550 graduate and professional
 - 9 departments with over 22 programs
 - 2 campuses and 11 field research stations across the state



Why do an assessment survey?

- Student and faculty concerns
- Agreement on lack of accountability, but conflicting details
 - Faculty perspective holds more weight
 - Student experiences not consistently and reliably monitored
- Data and reports did not tell the full picture
 - CFAES Campus Climate Survey (2022)
 - OSU Ombuds Report (2023)
 - Grad Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey (2023)



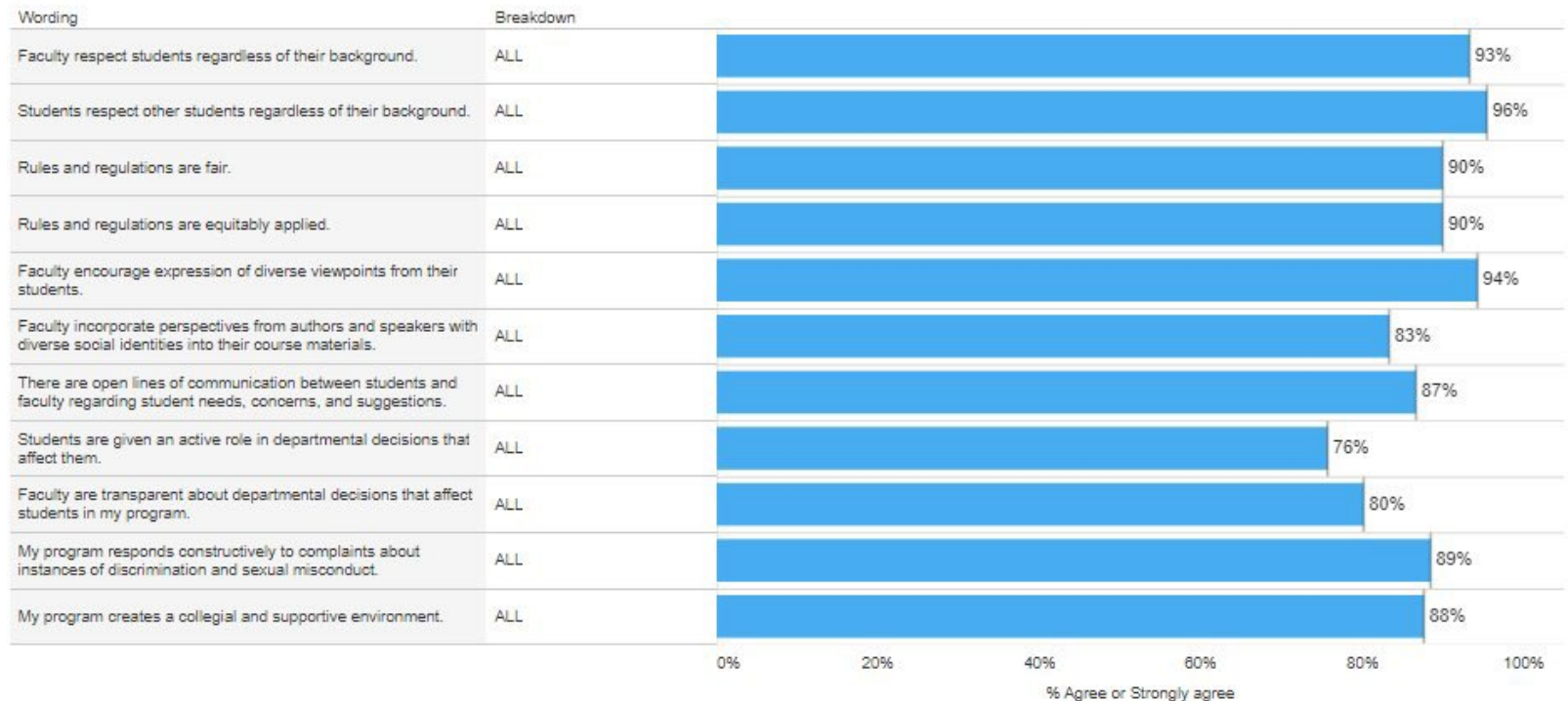
Grad SERU Data

Overall, results seem good... but sample size and breakouts were less useful

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current graduate/professional program?"

Campus: COL
College: Graduate Agriculture
Program: All
Breakdown: NO SELECTION
Number of Respondents: 87 to 91

Note: If there is no data in the chart below, the number of responses is too small to display.



A common tool: Grad SERU

Our college has programs represented in different colleges and campus locations

Every student has a voice.

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GRADUATE SCHOOL

gradSERU

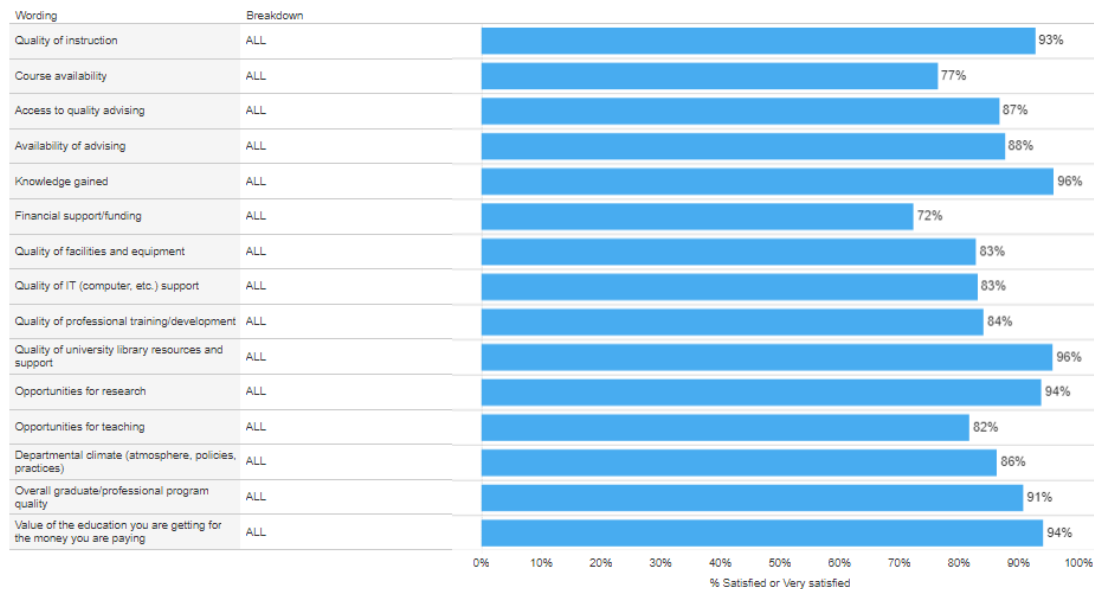
Graduate Student Experience in the Research University



"To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of your graduate/professional program?"

Campus: COL
College: Graduate Agriculture
Program: All
Breakdown: NO SELECTION
Number of Respondents: 87 to 99

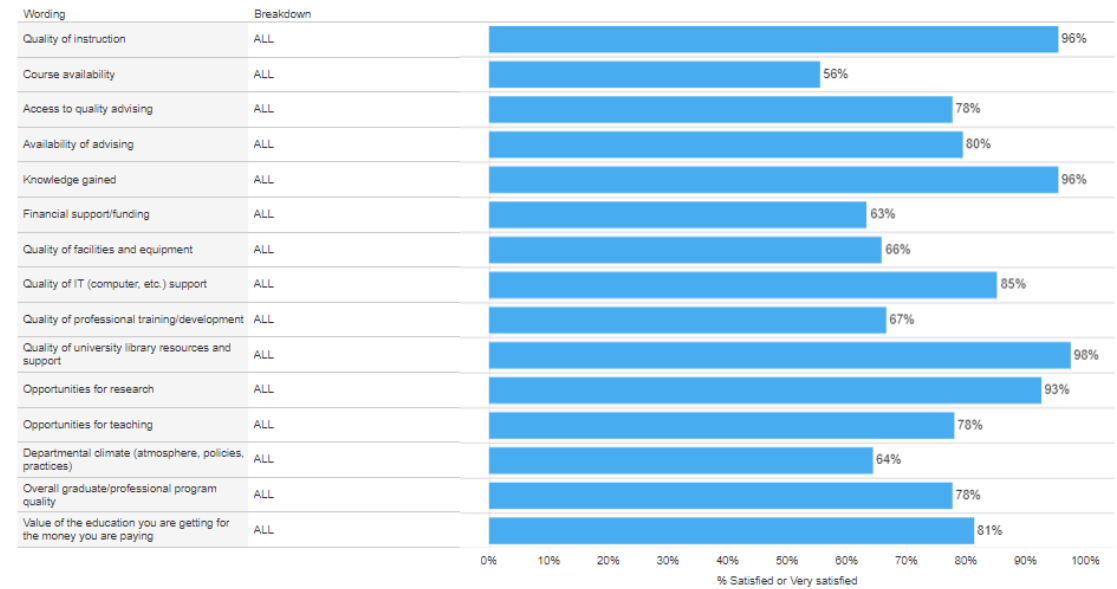
Note: If there is no data in the chart below, the number of responses is too small to display.



"To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of your graduate/professional program?"

Campus: COL
College: Grad Environment & Natural Res
Program: All
Breakdown: NO SELECTION
Number of Respondents: 32 to 45

Note: If there is no data in the chart below, the number of responses is too small to display.



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We needed more information!



Survey Design

Purpose: Assess the quality of graduate student advising in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES)

#1. Graduate Student Survey

Open Jan. 31, 2024 – Mar. 1, 2024

- 23 Likert scale
- 1 open-ended
- 152 completed responses
- **23% response rate**

#2. Faculty Survey

Open Apr. 22, 2024 – May 10, 2024

- 21 Likert scale
- 8 multiple-choice
- 3 open-ended
- 99 completed responses
- **30% response rate**



Major Findings

Differences between groups (e.g., gender, race, campus)

I am comfortable sharing my professional goals with my advisor.

- Men graduate students felt more comfortable when compared with the overall mean ($p < 0.05$)
- Columbus students felt more comfortable than Wooster campus ($p < 0.05$)



Major Findings

	Mean	SD
I feel that graduate students begin their program with the academic rigor they need to succeed.	3.37	1.08
I know how to direct international graduate students to appropriate resources (e.g., visa questions, work requirements).	3.08	1.20
I know the resources available for international graduate students.	3.03	1.11



Major findings – Dept Differences

	CFAES	Dept
I am supportive of my advisee(s) taking time away from graduate work for occasionally outside activity (e.g., doctor's appointment, family emergency).	4.75	4.67
I provide a safe environment for my advisee(s).	4.68	4.67
I am able to meet with my advisee(s) in a timely manner.	4.67	4.73
I provide guidance to my advisee(s) on producing publications and presenting research.	4.63	4.80
I support professional development opportunities (e.g., involvement in professional associations, networking) for my advisee(s).	4.58	4.80
It is important to advise students based on their specific needs/wants.	4.54	4.67
I am supportive of my advisee(s) taking time to manage school-life balance.	4.50	4.53
My advisee(s) are comfortable sharing their professional goals with me.	4.47	4.67
I allow for flexibility for my advisee(s)' work/lab schedule (e.g., work from home, flexible hours).	4.45	4.13
My advisee(s) respect me.	4.34	4.40



Differences Between Students and Faculty

	Mean
Faculty: It is important to advise students based on their specific needs/wants.	4.54
Student: I feel comfortable approaching my advisor when I need personal support (e.g., mental health, family emergency).	3.88

	Mean
Faculty: I provide clear expectations to my advisee(s).	4.32
Student: My advisor provides clear expectations.	3.78

	Mean
Faculty: I provide guidance to my advisee(s) on producing publications and presenting research.	4.63
Student: I feel my advisor provides guidance to produce publications and present research.	4.08



Dissemination of Survey Results

- Meetings with departmental leadership and faculty
- Sharing with graduate students
- Discussions with other graduate programs and colleges
- Ongoing discussions with Graduate Program Coordinators and Faculty Administrators



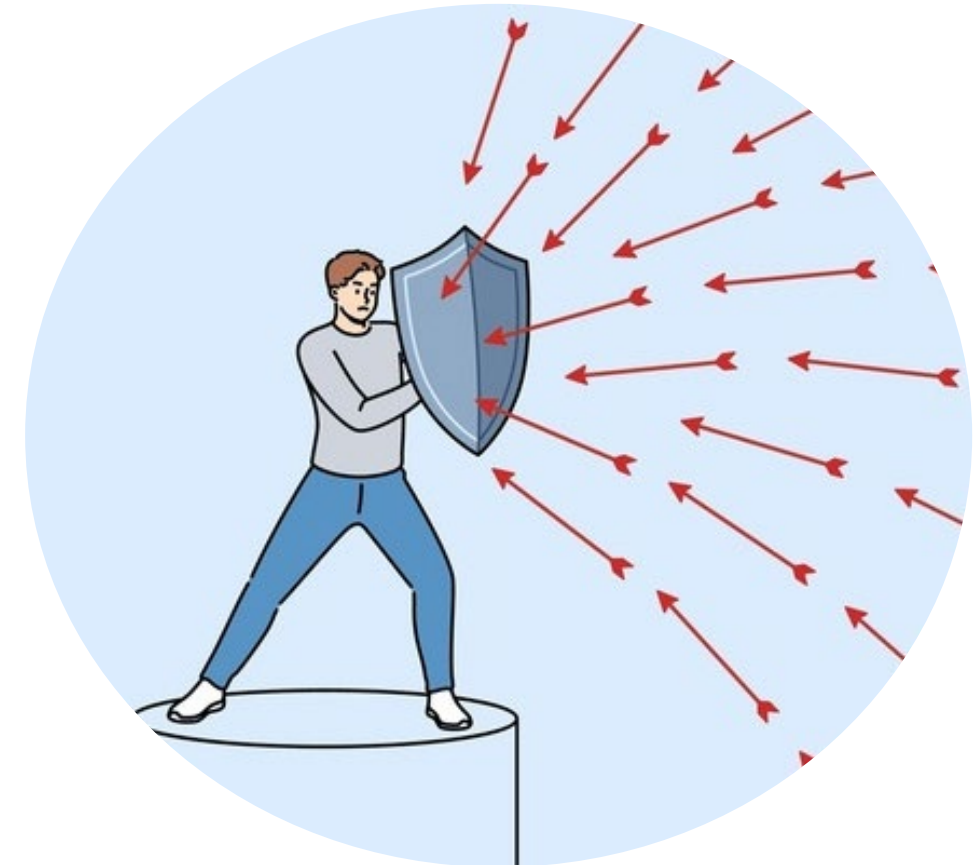
	Mean	XX	Range
I know my advisor's expectations for taking time away from lab work.	3.88	3.29	3.29 – 4.83
Comfortable approaching my advisor when I need personal support (e.g., mental health, family emergency).	3.88	3.50	3.50 – 4.50
My advisor has helped me to integrate into the profession.	3.88	3.50	3.39 – 4.83
I am given timely feedback by my advisor on progress towards graduation.	3.86	3.57	3.22 – 4.50
My advisor provides clear expectations.	3.78	3.29	3.29 – 4.50
My department has provided me opportunities to serve the department or university in various capacities outside of teaching or research.	3.73	3.64	3.33 – 4.22
I am satisfied with the quality of advising I have received from my department.	3.64	3.07	3.07 – 4.13

	SD, D	SD, D, N	A, SA
I know my advisor's expectations for taking time away from lab work.	28.8	49.9	50.1
Comfortable approaching my advisor when I need personal support (e.g., mental health, family emergency).	28.5	49.9	50.1
My advisor has helped me to integrate into the profession.	21.4	57.1	42.9
I am given timely feedback by my advisor on progress towards graduation.	28.5	35.6	64.3
My advisor provides clear expectations.	28.6	42.9	57.2
My department has provided me opportunities to serve the department or university in various capacities outside of teaching or research.	14.2	35.6	64.4
I am satisfied with the quality of advising I have received from my department.	35.7	50.0	50.0



Faculty Reactions Varied

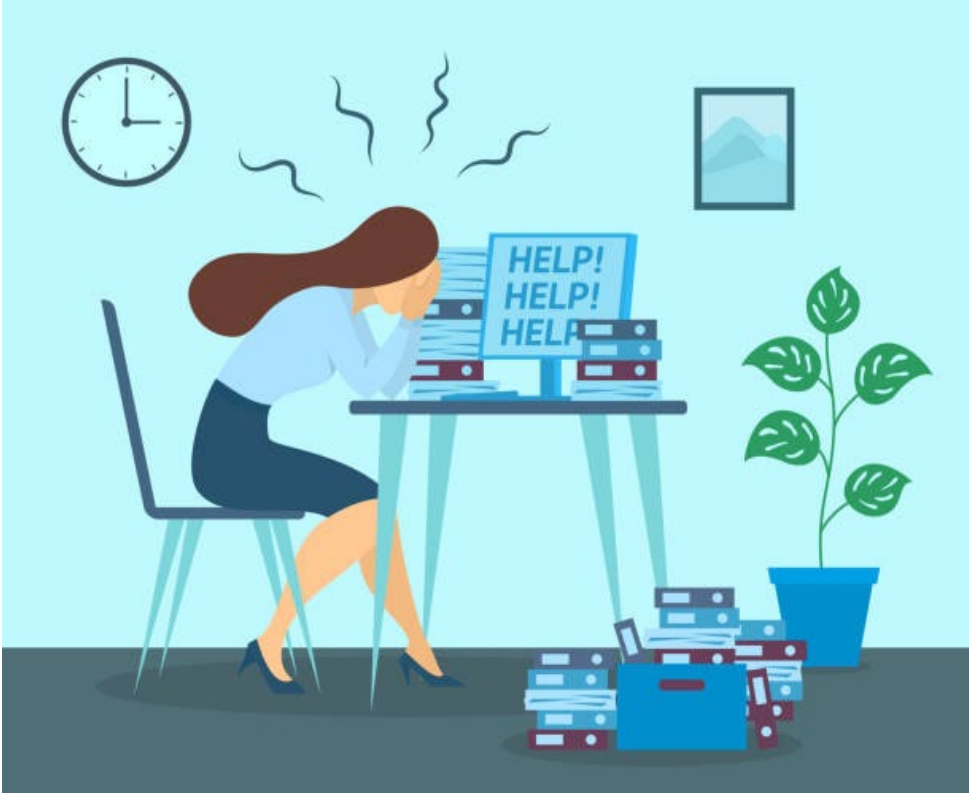
- Deflect
 - Validity of survey
 - Nothing we can do
 - “We aren’t mental health professionals”
 - Students lack preparation and work ethic
- Accept
 - We can do better
 - Champions for the students



Student Reactions Similar

- Most agreed with the survey responses
- How does the institution hold faculty accountable?
 - Issues go unresolved
 - Lowers morale
 - Ensure that students aren't the only 'watchdog'





What did we learn?

- Faculty think they are doing better than students perceive
- Poor advising relationships can create a toxic learning environment
- Expectations vary
- Need for improved oversight



Targeted Response Plan

Survey Identified: Misaligned expectations

We are:

- Increasing transparency
- Clarifying roles
- Developing reference documents

Survey identified: Knowledge gaps

- Developing faculty workshops
 - Mentoring
 - International Students
 - Mental Health

Developing first-year series

- Communication
- Time management
- Resilience and Mental Health
- Career development

Survey identified: Accountability challenges

- Group with more power has less accountability
- Clarifying grievance procedures and consequences
- Speaking with college and departmental leadership so they understand their options



Graduate Student Professional Rights and Responsibilities (summary)

This document serves to outline expectations for graduate students within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University. It was developed in 2024 by the CFAES Graduate Student Advisory Council in coordination with the CFAES Office for Research and Graduate Education. Full details can be found on the CFAES Graduate Education webpage: <https://grad.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/>

1. Responsibilities of Graduate Students

As a graduate student, you have several key responsibilities that are crucial for your academic and professional development. As a student, you are expected to meet the following standards:

- **Knowledge of Policies:** You are primarily responsible for knowing the rules and policies outlined in the [Graduate School handbook](#) and your [Graduate Program handbook](#), as well as monitoring your progress throughout your degree. It is crucial to stay informed and compliant with institutional guidelines.
- **Academic Progress:** You should make satisfactory progress in your academic program. This includes meeting all program requirements, maintaining a good academic standing, and adhering to timelines for degree completion.
- **Professional Conduct:** You are expected to exhibit professionalism in all academic and research activities. This includes maintaining integrity, being respectful in interactions, and adhering to ethical standards in research and scholarship.
- **Respect for Diversity:** Embrace and respect the diversity of the academic community, including differences in ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives.
- **Communication:** You are expected to maintain open and timely communication with your advisor and other members of your academic committee. This includes regular updates on your progress, seeking feedback, and discussing any issues that may affect your academic journey.
- **Engagement:** Active participation in your academic community is essential. This includes attending seminars, workshops, and conferences, contributing to research projects, and engaging with peers and faculty. Take initiative in your academic and professional development. Seek out opportunities for learning, networking, and skill development.

2. Rights of Graduate Students

Graduate students are granted certain rights that protect their interests and ensure a

Student Rights and Responsibilities

- University of Colorado Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, 2010 - [link](#)
- Pennsylvania State University Graduate Student Bill of Rights, 2012 - [link](#)
- CFAES Graduate Student Advisory Council, 2024 – undergoing final review

Professional Rights and Responsibilities (PRR)

Introduction

The foundation for the *Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Academic Leaders* was first developed by the faculty at CU Boulder in the early 1980s. The PRR describes the professional standards faculty members are expected to maintain and provides a mechanism for addressing allegations that a faculty member has failed to meet those standards.

PRR Documents & Links

- ★ The [Academic Affairs policy on the PRR](#) gives force and effect to the provisions of the PRR as approved by the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) on March 4, 2010, and as amended subsequently.
- ★ The [PRR](#) comprises the procedures of this policy and applies to anyone classified as faculty, including tenured, tenure-track, instructional, research, and clinical faculty. Please see the preamble for more details on the application of the document, plus types of official and working titles.
- ★ There is [Skillsoft training for the PRR](#) available. All academic leaders are mandated by the provost to complete this, and all are welcome to learn more about faculty rights and privileges and concomitant professional expectations and responsibilities.
- ★ Additional information on the PRR can be found on the [BFA Resources webpage](#).

The image shows the Table of Contents for the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Academic Leaders (PRR). The document is titled "PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY MEMBERS AND ROLES AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC LEADERS (PRR)" and is dated "Revised 2012". The Table of Contents lists the following sections: PREAMBLE, PART I: PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS OF FACULTY MEMBERS, PART II: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, ETHICAL PRINCIPLES, AND FACULTY CONDUCT, and PART III: ROLES AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC LEADERS. Each section is further divided into sub-sections and numbered items.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY MEMBERS AND ROLES AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC LEADERS (PRR) Revised 2012
TABLE OF CONTENTS
PREAMBLE Application of This Document Origin of This Document
PART I: PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS OF FACULTY MEMBERS
PART II: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, ETHICAL PRINCIPLES, AND FACULTY CONDUCT
A. Teaching and Students 1. Expected Conduct 2. Unacceptable Conduct
B. Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work 1. Expected Conduct 2. Unacceptable Conduct
C. Citizenship 1. Expected Conduct 2. Unacceptable Conduct
D. Additional University Policies
PART III: ROLES AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC LEADERS
A. General Statements Regarding Departments and Academic Leaders 1. Appointment, Term, and Renewal 2. Compensation/Performance Evaluation 3. Orientation, Onboarding, and Ongoing Professional Development 4. Compensation
B. Ethical Conduct
C. Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Leaders 1. Leader of the Academic Unit 2. Administrator of the Academic Unit

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

- University of Colorado, Boulder: Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Academic Leaders, early 1980s ([link](#))
- Pennsylvania State University Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, 1973 - [link](#)
- CFAES working on this



Moving Forward

Harnessing the Magnum Opus: Assessment

- Standardize metrics and milestones for advising quality
- Simplify processes for consistent tracking
- Highlight best practices and implement changes to address shortfalls
- Routinely share progress with stakeholders for accountability
- Periodic faculty review as institutional check

Discussion

- How would you rate the quality of graduate advising at your institution?
 - Would this response differ based on who you ask?
- What metrics do you use to assess mentoring quality?
 - How might you better account for student experience in learning?
- In what ways might stakeholders help or hinder improvement?



Questions?



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